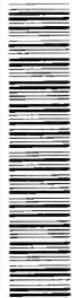


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# SQUARED CIRCLES AND OTHER POEMS

BY

HARRY MACPHERSON



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## DEDICATION

*To those whose heartbeats vary now and then,  
Emotion-swayed as Poseidon ruled the sea—  
At times a bellowing breeze that joyously  
Speeds up your lagging voyage, or again  
Some peaceful calm to smooth and sooth your path,  
Leaving a dreaming, drifting time to spend;  
Or veering to the tempest's biting wrath—  
Your barque the venture-craft, Variety,  
Bearing a cargo joyous without end:—  
Of baby smiles, of dancing, distant chimes,  
Moonlight on spires, the colored flame of sky—  
Love, life and beauty ever flowing by—  
To you and all my loved ones—every friend—  
I dedicate this little sheaf of rhymes.*

—H. M.

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POEMS  
BY  
**HARRY MACPHERSON**

## SQUARED CIRCLES

Some are flat—nor high nor low—  
No heights, no depths, no Heav'n, no hell;  
With dull, plain apathy they go  
On cloddy level, and think it well;  
Black death, white life they do not know!  
What tale can gray *existence* tell?

### I

Where lilacs drip with vernal rain  
And Summer gilds the emerald grain,  
Where Autumn cracks vermillion leaves  
And Winter fairy-pattern weaves—  
Embroidered chill on the window-glass—  
Where I was a lad and she a lass,  
Back to my fond home-land I strayed,  
Back to the real game, fairly played,  
Where simplicity's tyro-gaze  
Stares with wonder at novel ways.

## SQUARED CIRCLES

### II

Train-trekking toward the gates of dawn  
How suddenly sea and hills were gone;  
How soon on undulating plains  
Warm day kissed lips of ardent grains.  
I sped ahead to a spot of charm,  
Trivial town beside our farm,  
Remembering well despite the years—  
Mad, interlying, stirring years  
So choked by laughter edged with tears—  
How folks on Saturdays would gather  
To gossip of the crops and weather.

### III

Sure knots before the dry-goods store  
Would swap the news and rustic lore:  
That planting beets or carrot crops  
In moonlight made 'em go to tops;  
How measles raged down by the "crick"—  
The whole blamed neighborhood was sick;  
How ev'ry feller in the Spring

Should take a tonic, banishing  
With sulphur and molasses all  
The ails that piled up since the Fall.

## IV

I idled on. The train raced through  
A hundred towns, a city or two.  
Familiar signs within my range  
Of hungry vision seemed so strange.  
New depots here and paved streets there,  
Unshaded, regular and square.  
Till finally the trainman bawled  
My boyhood village. As he called  
The name in accents coarsely clear,  
With alien sound it stung my ear.

## V

How changed are manhood-conjured scenes  
When mem'ry upon childhood leans!  
Here a building, remembered well,  
That recognized and spoke. "Do tell!"

It shrilled in quaint, familiar tone,  
"Where have you been and how you've grown!"  
Haggard and wrinkled in roof and wall  
My friend had shrunk, who once was tall;  
Dwarfed by the curse of my heightened gaze,  
Dulled by the splendor of newer ways,  
Dimmed by the shadow of structures bold  
Flaunting their youth to the warped and old.

## VI

And wagon tracks? Long since all rolled,  
Straightened and paved—how queerly cold  
The same streets seemed. No curve the eye  
Relieved. And there came crashing by—  
Stunning my soul—well known machines,  
But unfamiliar in these scenes;  
This town where beauty used to glow—  
This town I knew, but didn't know.  
I spied the marshal from afar,  
Then closer. "Chief" adorned his star!

## VII

The folks I'd known spoke language quaint,  
Oft interspersed with "fetch" or "ain't."  
"I calculate" would slip from tongue  
As fluently as an old song sung.  
  
What was this talk, this conversation  
These persons made? Some hesitation—  
It seemed—was lurking on each lip  
As though they ever feared to slip  
Back down to phrases, early-learned,  
And now by fresh-paint culture spurned.

## VIII

I met Jack Price. He as a boy  
Had known no luxury but joy.  
His parents (luck is often murky)  
Were well-nigh poor as old Job's turkey;  
Jack—ever an ambitious cub—  
Invited me to his Country Club.  
Youth-chum talking with coin-hard eyes  
And voice that sought to patronize.

To view success makes one inspired—  
But what a broad "a" he'd acquired!

## IX

"And where," I asked, "is Clinton Hall,  
That kid whose father owned most all  
The real estate in town?" Price said:  
"Perhaps you know, the old man's dead;  
Left all his stuff to Clint and he  
Had a wild, four-year spending spree—  
He doesn't count now, really poor;  
Is selling shoes in Newman's store."  
High-born can fall, low-born rise.  
No sympathy in Price's eyes.

## X

Down by the railroad where I'd played  
And fought in Humboldt's lot, they'd made  
A regulated playground there,  
Fretted and fenced with grownup care;  
My swimming hole in the careless stream

That used to echo with bare-boy scream,  
Improved by a store-sold diving chutes  
For nice, clean boys in bathing suits.  
Rough woods, just made for walnut larks,  
Were *beautified*—one of the city parks.

## XI

Out on the slopeside, weather swept,  
Where tired Old-timers softly slept,  
I went. The graveyard was too bright  
With tended flowers to left and right  
All orderly. A dead breeze moaned  
And slid by hard graves freshly stoned;  
Expensive monuments replaced  
Those etched by grief, by teardrops traced.  
Gay gilded letters crowned the gate;  
"Memorial Park"—our graveyard's fate.

## XII

Remember how the Sunday swains  
In winter snows or springtime rains

Or other seasons went to wait  
For church-girls just outside the gate?  
When parsons damned in words immortal,  
Shaken, they faltered at the portal.  
But in Cathedral, rich and fine,  
Unmellowed yet by time or vine,  
Unhallowed fearless gather there—  
Smug lectures sooth, they never scare.

## XIII

Drawn to a measure, taped and ruled  
The people seemed—all virtue-schooled  
With regulations writ for curbing  
Irregularities disturbing.  
Of old, by keen revivals prod,  
They shouted sinners back to God.  
And if they'd fallen far from grace  
How joy-lit was each Heavened face!  
But sons of these, year in, year out,  
Curse sin, but ne'er for sinners shout.

## XIV

Who knows but humans can become  
By long residing, like their home,  
And in a palace, stately, fair,  
Absorb a grand and gracious air;  
Or where the sharp peaks pierce the blue  
And wet seas thicken nightly dew,  
The people go from high to low  
And up to high—all to and fro.  
After pain, pleasure's vast—  
We're happiest when sorrow's past.

## XV

A fallen woman plucked from fire  
Has super-virtue, none is higher.  
Coarse granite is the statue base,  
So staunch that time cannot efface  
The higher marble, smoothly fine  
In graceful texture, slender line.  
Crudities in romantic tale  
But limn the lovely lyrics frail.

Nor pure nor beautiful nor strong  
Are middle morals, stone or song.

## XVI

Land of my Dreams—I left it there,  
Vibrationless as the pre-storm air,  
Curbing and cramping all emotion,  
Chill as an ice-breath on the ocean;  
Specified, squared, surveyed and sure.  
Certified, warranted right and pure.  
Back I hurried to rest my eyes  
On red-flecked sea when dim day dies,  
Mystery-masts in the harbors old,  
Magical mountains of unfound gold;

## XVII

Shifting mists and the restless breeze  
Pungent with odor of other seas,  
Missions where age-green ivy sighs  
And laughter and love in friendly eyes:  
Loveliness smiles—no one suspects her;

Sin reforms—and none rejects her;  
Only Dullness suffers pain,  
Scorned—she's shallow, flat and plain;  
Hers small credit for blameless station,  
Ugliness never fights temptation.

## XVIII

North or south or east or west,  
I'll picture my home as I loved it best,  
Youthful and arrogant, raw and free,  
Flayed by winds like the storms at sea,  
Balmed by peace of the purple sage—  
Erring folks in a humaner age;  
People with frailties, not too wise,  
Novelty in each fresh sunrise;  
White hearts, black hearts, hearts of gold;  
Warm-blooded, hot-blooded—never cold!



**WILD STUFF**

Let me go where air is thin, up in the hills once more,  
With a staunch pal and rod and reel by mountain torrents' roar;  
Crackle a fire before a tent pitched beneath a pine,  
At daybreak let me whip the stream—and the world is mine.

Give me a gun and a good boat when the air begins to chill,  
Then let the birds go flashing up and let me shoot until  
My muscles ache, my eyes tire and night comes fluttering down  
While back I tramp to the river camp, far from the futile town.

Boots of rubber up to the hips, cap and coat of leather,  
What do I care for the drenching air as storm clouds rush together?  
Freedom of woolen strengthens me as I bend to the pulling oars,  
Change and wild forgetfulness in the different Out-of-doors.



## MISSION CLIFF GARDENS

(Sunset Song)

Where Nature's garden splendor overflows,  
Deep shadows blur the paths with purple stain,  
While winy wind across the mesa blows  
With true Pacific balm in sun or rain;  
And evening skies are amethyst and rose  
As windows of the west fold shut again.

Off there a sun-bathed valley casts a spell,  
All wound with highway like a ribbon thin;  
Where toned of old the silv'ry mission bell,  
Mellow as light, aiding the priests to win  
Faith-followers; what tale the vale would tell  
If it could reminiscences begin.

And other beauty! How the color gleams  
As the proud peacock spreads his feathers there,  
Rich blue and satin green within the beams  
Of sunshine tempered by the twilight air;

Bending acacias with the breath of dreams

Spread fragile perfume, delicate and rare.

But in the plaza, palmed, at close of day,

As muted night creeps up with starry stealth,

Comes lilt of laughter, children at their play,

Resplendent in their Southland-given health-

The amber gold of sunset's richest ray

Forgotten as we view this red-cheek wealth.



**BLIND?**

He sits upon a plaza bench—

The day is warm but he is cold.

The dark sun pounds his dead eyes,

Worthless and old.

Laughing they pass in silken skirts—

How keen the glance of blind men's ears!

They show him sights that sped his pulse

In vanished years.

He sits upon the plaza bench—

Night comes with ocean-chilling breeze.

But he is warm with the thrilling touch

Of memories!



## SAN DIEGO

Here on the rim of a sapphire sea,  
Near to the mountains of glinting green,  
Winds of the West touch tenderly  
Harbor and highlands and vales between.

Wealth of the mesas and purple hills,  
Fruit of the soil and the verdant vine—  
Riches the prodigal sun distills—  
Arrayed, displayed in this mart o' mine.

Apples of gold on the bending bough,  
Soft, sleek cattle with coats of silk;  
Glorious grapes that are ripening now—  
Land of mellifluent honey and milk.

Melody market where palm trees play,  
Lovely as lilt of a soft guitar;  
Tones of the tropics are calling today—  
Come to my bountiful, bright bazaar.

## ALUMNI

Queer pencilings scribbled in the book,  
Old Latin grammar—just a bit of junk—  
Initials of forgotten boyhood friends;  
Memories lie slumbering in a trunk.

And here's a tattered program of a dance  
With names of youthful sweethearts written there;  
Titles of dead songs that used to stir  
Our dancing feet before they knew a care.

Scrap-book, ragged story of the years,  
Those pleasant years when, had we only known  
(As children never will) that joys sublime  
Are fragile things possessed by youth alone.

How carelessly with many a laugh and jest  
These youngsters toss about their golden wealth;  
School days brimming full with radiance,  
Knowledge and life's own dewy morn of health.

Queer pencilings scribbled in a book—

Class numerals, some mystic signs in Greek—

Poignant the glad-sad memories

Of Graduation Week.



**TOWERING**

Standing where a thousand roses blow—  
Their petals bending in the pleasant breeze—  
We see a sweep of green that row on row  
Blurs in a distant vista of warm trees;  
And pointing to the Southland's smiling blue,  
Slenderly fair as any maid or flower,  
A shaft of white between each glowing hue,  
Rises the lyric California tower.



**SCHOOLGIRLS**

Heaviest tomes they lightly swing

Off to school with their chattering,

Ah, but it makes the heartstrings sing

Just at the carefree sight!

Youthful light in their bright, young eyes,

Eyes that are neither too dull nor wise,

Healthfully seeking each new surprise—

Oh for a pen to write!

Silks and satins and bold brocades

Heightening, brightening worldlier maids;

Theirs the necessity for such aids—

Glorious glamors of grace.

Can they compare with the high-school lass,

Bloused in simplicity's primer class

Who speeds our hearts as we see her pass

With eager and girlish face?

Learning their lessons of love and life,  
Yet untouched by the storms and strife  
That all in an elderly world are rife,  
Tingeing our souls with gray;  
Pray that they never may feel defeat,  
Let them laugh while their laughter's sweet—  
God keep the song in their dancing feet,  
Just as it is today.



**LOMA**

Between the mast-flecked harbor and the sea,  
Point Loma bathes in sundown mists of gold;  
Wrapped in the purple robes of royalty,  
Adrip with jewels, reviews the pageantry—  
Watches the wealth of all the West unfold.



## ARTISTRY

If he were selling gilded things,  
Jewels bold and brazen rings,  
Shoes or clothes or furniture,  
Buyers would be fairly sure  
To come with money to his door  
And purchase from his sodden store.

Alas! He only has for sale  
A little rift of dawning, pale;  
A songbird fluttering in a tree  
Or sunset colored gorgeously,  
An open road, a country brook—  
The idle come, the curious look,  
They smile, and praise and pass him by;  
And never buy!

If he were playing raucous song  
With tempo swift to please the throng,  
The crowds would swiftly gather there  
To pay for every careless air.

**Alas! His music is but this—  
A mother's smile, a baby's kiss,  
An anthem to eternity,  
A hymn of hope or song of joy;**

**And some may come and hold their breath  
At thrilling shades of life or death;  
And some may pause to hear the trill  
Of wild fowl on the hill—  
And stirred, they only laud or sigh;  
But do not buy!**



## LA FIESTA

Queen of a glistening realm is she,  
Golden and gemmed is the pageantry  
Passing her palace of pearl;  
Wealth of the soil and the sea arrayed,  
Lavish and rare in a vast parade—  
Splendors that God and Man hath made,  
Colorful banners unfurl.

Who in her retinue is the chap  
With the dancing feet and the jingling cap?  
His seems a prominent place.  
Can it be Folly? No! Jollity gay.  
Laughingly lifting the hours away  
With a bow to his ruler then seems to say:  
"Gloom has abandoned the race."

Ministers mighty—all serious, gray,  
Smile in exceptional lightness today,  
Won by the merriment spell;

Even old Commerce gravely unbends,  
Flinging forth serpentine over his friends,  
Knowing when all the frivolity ends  
    There will be profits to tell.

There in her train in a delicate maid  
Richly in gossamer garments arrayed—  
    Fair as the firmament blue—  
No one but beauty could have such eyes,  
Light of the stars or the fair sunrise  
And hair like the West when a twilight dies,  
    Flaming a gorgeous hue.

Queen of the South—on a scintillant throne  
When magical scepter is waved there is thrown  
    About her a summertime lace;  
Hark! Hear the charming, melodious strain!  
Hidden musicians create a refrain—  
Voices of blossoms in soft-falling rain,  
    Fragile with loveliest grace.

**JUST HOME**

Nothing ornate, but flower-clad and neat,

A modest house upon a quiet street.

How like a thousand others in the town

Is this small bungalow of green and brown!

And yet 'tis finer far than all the rest—

No matter what they are—this is the best.

At evening as you near the homey place

There at the window is a lovely face.

With welcome-eyes a-shine like baby stars,

All eagerly she scans the coming cars.

How beautiful a house—though drab and plain—

When a tiny nose is pressed against the pane.



**LURE O' THE OPEN ROAD**

Oh, the Open Road in her dress of Spring  
Is singing so tenderly  
A swinging and lyrical, luring thing,  
Attuned to a melody  
All sweet with the breath of an April park  
And rich with the throat of a meadow lark,  
Now calling us eagerly.

No siren is she—this Southland maid—  
Although she would draw us far  
From work and care and the tracks of trade  
Away where the playfields are—  
To silver beaches and hills of gold;  
To modern wonders and missions old,  
We'll fly in a fleeting car.

The cheek of dawn is pink with light,  
Ablush in the waking day;  
A turquoise sky has banished night  
As our motors purr and sway;  
Before the nose of our swift machine

Lies California—gold and green—

And a smoothly broad highway.

Oh the Open Road in the open day

Is fresh with the youthful year,

Then comes the rainbow sunset ray

And starnight, clean and clear,

When music of purple comes bending down

From the jeweled sky as we leave the town

To speed on our track of cheer.

The Open Road is a violet miss,

Her eyes are the petals, frail;

Her lips are dreamy with sunbeam kiss,

She's telling a magic tale

Of Fairylands we may hope to see

In happiness-hours as we joyously

Float forth on the Gypsy Trail.

Where western beaches tint our dreams

Or up in the fir-pine hills;

By rumbling sea or troutful streams

The motor will work our wills—

Come speed with me from the streets of men

And drink of the wine of sunshine then

That the Call o' The Road distills.

**SCRAPS**

Diamonds in ash heaps, pearls in piles of shells!

Who knows what hidden riches we may find

In scrapful junk of even poorest kind?

Words upon words—a heap of mental spells.

Digging within the mass that's piled so high

Of maudlin mediocrity entwined,

Some lifting thought, rich treasure, we may find—

A baby's smile, the song of birds, the sky.



**OLD RAG DOLLS**

Father so happily homeward brings  
To year-old child a lot of things—  
Some blocks, a rattle, doll that sings—  
And baby hugs them all;  
But though at first she'll laugh and coo  
At all the toys so bright and new  
She's soon discarding them to chew  
And love her old rag doll.

Speeding years new pleasures bring,  
New friends we meet, new songs we sing,  
Luxuries come till everything  
Old-fashioned seems to pall;  
But when the paint wears off new toys,  
Enjoyment of them, somehow, cloys,  
And like the baby girls and boys  
We love each old rag doll.

**GREEN EYES**

Beaming your liquid light—

Lamps of love—

Starrier than the night

Far above.

Eyes that can warmly glow—

Love inspire—

Often can flash, I know,

Flaming fire.

Warning upon the shoal—

Beacon bright—

Guiding me to my goal

In the night.



## SEPTEMBER'S LAMB

Oh, the red gold gleams in her vagrant, sunlit tresses,  
And her eyes are shining widely with a new light, gay;  
And she chatters of the wonder while we gaze in fond caresses  
As we start our little baby off to school today.

For it seems so short since she lisped her first expression,  
Since she toddled with her daring feet across the floor,  
But the time flew fast—there's a feeling of depression  
As I watch her grow; a babyhood is gone once more.

She is six years old—how our hearts are proudly beating  
As we watch her with her little books go down the walk;  
There are smiles and tears for the years so swiftly fleeting  
While we look at one another \* \* and we dare not talk!

Ah, the six-year-olds—what a world of life before them;  
As they work and learn and suffer may their dreams come true;  
How we breathe a prayer that their friends may all adore them  
And forgive their faults—their tiny faults—as parents do.

**CLOSE HARMONY**

Gemmed with stars the silent dome—flashing red, green or white;  
A marvel moon is sleeping 'neath her canopy of night.

Lovers and a limpid lake! A nightbird singing, croons  
Quaint lullabies to his muted mate—same old plaintive tunes.

Moon madness and star gladness—let them sigh, but I recall  
Far sweeter music than the birds have ever sung at all.

Throbbing drums, the weird trombone, a haunting saxaphone  
Have swung into a fevered strain, we claim it as our own.

A foxtrot lures our eager feet, we swing into the time  
And all our world is whirled in subtle melody and rhyme?

Hot arms without intention press more tightly as we sway;  
And what is there to make us care? Tomorrow? Yesterday?

Nay, for tonight the music throbs the tune our hearts are beating,  
And step by step we glide and slide, our glances never meeting.

We'll let those other lovers have their lakeside and their moon,  
Come dance with me, my Symphony, this is our lovetide tune.

**MOTHER'S DAY**

Symbol showing we care—

    Of love, pure-bright—

Blossom this day we wear,

    Red or white.

See, in a little while they fade;

Droop their dying petals on our breast,

For at best,

Flowers are fragile things, not made

To live upon a coat.

An exhibition of our hearts—

An outward show within the marts

Of men of what we feel—

But real;

A living thing, this love of ours,

Unlike the emblem flowers;

For more than living—undying!

Blossoms wither and die

    Within an hour or two,

But mother-love is eternal

    As the sky's blue.

## PARSNIPS

Through all the weary, dreary years

I've eaten in this vale of tears—

With buttered corn upon my ears—

    There's something that has vexed me;

There's been a question in my mind,

(I really have one, of a kind)

It's popped up ev'ry time I've dined—

    It often has perplexed me.

On tables here and tables there.

On tables round and tables square,

At home, hotel or boarding fare,

    Each time they came I shook 'em;

I never could devour the weed,

(Or is it fruit?) and I've agreed

With others that there was no need

    For wasting time to cook 'em.

I've seen them camouflaged in creams,

I've seen them steamed in steamer steams,

But never in my weirdest dreams

    Have I essayed to choose them;

Or oiled or boiled or stewed or fried  
Have never even seen them tried  
By diners thin, or fat folks wide—  
    Nobody seems to use them.

But now a friend says they are fine  
If brewed into a parsnip wine—  
He says it makes a drink divine,  
    With lots of kick, illegal;  
The Volstead Law has taught us much,  
We're brewing now to beat the Dutch,  
But of all knowledge thus and such,  
    This cops the Golden Eagle!

If parsnips can be taken from  
The menu cards and made to hum  
In gala wine—that's going some!  
    I'll cheer them like a Deuce-Full;  
I know the things are not a food,  
Nor medicine, I've understood  
And if they'll make a drink that's good  
    (And *strong*) they may be useful.

## RESURRECTION

Love is a rosebush—roses bloom and die,  
Fragrant and thorny, when the sunny sky  
Has chilled to gray and comes the cruel snow  
To blot warm color with a cloak of white,  
The blossoms pass; but ever if there grow  
Live roots beneath the sod, return alight  
With perfume roses in another spring—  
Dreaming and bending in the sun or rain.

Love—or a flower—what a wonder-thing  
That lives and seems to die and lives again.  
All tenderly I do my gardening  
Against the time chill sleet beats on the pane.  
Roses once more shall smile and bloom and blow,  
And faded living love again shall grow.

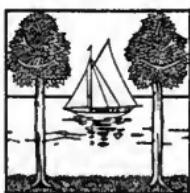


**TRUCE**

Shivers of sunlight gleam on the stream,  
Silver the trout as they leap for the fly;  
Up in the mountains, far from the town,  
Lazily dreaming am I.

Just for a day, here let me play,  
Let me forget the city and walls;  
Soothing with cheer on the tired ear  
Nature's soft whispering falls.

Tomorrow I go again back to the strife—  
Back to my old loves—Hurry and Fray;  
Tenderly balming the breath of the hills  
Cools me and calms me today.



## IMMORTAL RILEY

I like a song that hums to me of hidden mysteries,  
I like the mystic music and the grand philosophies,  
But best of all I love the simple folk-song harmonies.

The greater poets lead us into various winding ways,  
They lose our mental footsteps in hazy, devious maze,  
Not so beloved Riley who but wrote the plainer lays.

That wonder-brain is sleeping now; the brain that led a pen—  
A golden, thoughtful, happy pen that told of common men—  
Will form no more in human verse the songs we love and ken.

But though the one whom Nature loved now in her arms doth lie,  
And though the Unknown claims the man who made us laugh  
and cry,  
He ever shall be with us, for his songs shall never die.



**PATERNAL**

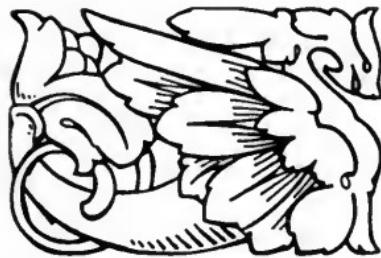
Jimmy McCann was a family man,  
A father, proud, was he,  
For to his home a babe had come,  
The very first, you see.

Jimmy's head was loudly red  
And the baby's head was too;  
Across his face a smile did chase  
And lit his eyes of blue.

For one whole week McCann would speak—  
As all new daddies do—  
To every friend and money spend  
On smokes for all he knew.

But one fine day his manner, gay,  
Was gone and his step was slow;  
No grin inspired, his eyes looked tired  
And his face was filled with woe.

"Kids are nice—they're worth the price  
We pay," said McCann, "and more;  
But I can't feel glad when baby's had  
The colic the night before!"



## SOFT SHACKLES

I worked today!

And yesterday and yesterdays before,  
I worked—  
Doing the same dull, tiring tasks,  
O'er and o'er.

Working today

Old happenings unbidden rushed to me—  
Far places, other friends.

And I wondered as I pondered  
If they'd greet me with the old-time fervor?  
And dreaming, hated this—  
Endless work!

Vagrantly I idled home

The truant thoughts tumbling my straying mind.

In a small home a woman waited  
With kisses and a happy story  
Of how the Baby spoke a word,  
Or walked across the floor.

I'll always work!

## TURKEY'S H. C. L.

The terrible Turk has got the blues,  
The Harem Blues, so runs the news,  
No longer dare he calmly choose  
A honeymooning series;  
Old H. C. L. has hit their lives  
And they must now cut down on wives,  
The dear, expensive dearies.

In Turkey, in ye olden days—  
In pre-war's gala, golden haze—  
They sat around and sang love-lays  
While lots of lovely ladies  
Shook up the wicked Turkey Trot,  
But now they can afford it not—  
High living costs like Hades!

Imagine some poor Turkish gent  
Who has a love for home's content

(And womenfolks) now forced to rent  
A dinky, small apartment;  
Too little to accommodate  
His sweeties, ten, in former state  
With each her own compartment.

They must retrench; it makes 'em sore  
To be too all-fired blanky poor  
To buy new clothes for three or four—  
And Turk girls sometimes wear 'em—  
So they, of course, must take these courses:  
Accept some non-support divorces—  
The cost of harems scare 'em.



**PARTING**

Do you recall those magic nights—

Those nights of long ago—

When all the Blue was filled with lights

That tinkled to and fro—

The nights when you and I were young,

And all our sorrows still unsung?

Do you recall the time that I—

As lovers sometimes so—

Sat out with you and watched the sky

On your front porch till half-past two?

How little then I kenned my fate—

Your father's boot was No. 8.



**MINE**

Wee dimpled hands reach to my face,

Wee arms clasp me in soft embrace

And Heaven is just a little pace—

Not far away—

As angel mouth lifts for a kiss.

No Midas wealth could purchase this—

My joy today.

A tousled head of thickening hair,

Three tiny teeth, a dancing pair

Of shining eyes and skin as fair

As Easter flower;

I said that Heaven's near, but when

"Daddy", she coos, I seem to ken

'Tis here this hour.

**GOLDEN GAME**

Men often fail or find when gray and old;  
How searing is their grim, dead search for gold!  
But sing of the one whose trek for treasure-trove  
Is rich adventure, rollicking romance—  
Gay quest of sport, contest to win and love;  
Joyfully fighting for Fortune's favor-glance  
Nor loses festive youth to gain success,  
Toward the top with many a jest he wends  
His way, content with just a little less  
Than grasping wretches, sacrificing friends—  
Their golden friends—and social happiness.  
Admirable victor in life's game of chance,  
Less lucky ones still cheer the winning way  
Of Conquerer who yet can smile and play.

(Note--This poem, dedicated to C. W. McCabe of San Diego, California, was written Sept. 10, 1921.)

**NEW YEAR**

I love the smell of the fresh-turned soil

Or the sight of a new-born day,

With red and gold in the east agleam,

The new are ever the things that beam

With promise replete alway.

I love to look at an unsoiled book,—

Though it sullies beneath my hand—

Unopened I fondle for new books seem

To speak to me ever of author's dream—

Untainted, fresh and grand.

I love the feel of a baby's hand,

And the smile on a baby's face;

Picturing things the babe may do

In his life ahead; I am certain, too,

He will fill a real man's place.

And so today as upon clean wall  
A calendar new I see,  
With a rush come plans for the unstained year,  
And never a thought of the past one, drear,  
But of happiness sure to be.



## WHISTLING

It seems but yesterday when all so proudly  
A seven-year-old, my laddie, came to me—  
“Look, Daddie! I’ve learned to whistle. See?”  
Then pursed his baby lips and bravely, loudly,  
Whistled a little, wavering, lilting tune—  
“Yankee Doodle” I think it was. “It’s fine!”  
I praised his wonder-feat. But all too soon  
He stretched into a youth, this boy o’ mine.

I used to listen for him late at night  
When he’d been out to high school dances, and  
He used to whistle home some song the band  
Had played, and step off quick and right;  
He’d click his heels so surely on the walk  
I’d always know ‘twas he, and smile.  
Then how I used to love his boy-man talk.  
Life for him contained a lot worth while.

Then the war came. He wasn’t old enough  
To go but every day around the place  
He’d whistle bugle calls and in his face

The great desire shone—'twas pretty tough  
When finally he said he couldn't bear  
To stay at home. But I let him go—  
Mighty proud of the youngster, too, but there  
Was a soul-ache—my only kid you know.

I used to get his letters—funny stuff  
He'd write about the "cooties" and the mud;  
And never a word of bayonets or blood  
Or homesickness—but I knew him well enough  
To feel he'd face machine-guns with a smile  
And whistle with that little boyish nod.  
His letters stopped. Then for an aching while  
We didn't know—and then we learned. Oh God!

Last night I lay and listened to the noise  
That drifted in: laughter—roar of cars—  
Nightbirds chattering underneath the stars—  
Music of the night; the city's voice.  
And then came ringing, singing from out there  
The click of heels time-stepping a refrain  
Some youngster whistling a patriotic air.  
My heart leaped—stopped! Then choked me with the  
pain.

**SHOPPING**

In the mottled market-place a blur of eager faces,  
Anxious fingers flinging forth the toil-won gold;  
Jade and myrrh and calico and cocoanuts and laces—  
What a luring store of things the counters hold.

Women flushed with fineries—silk and satin wrappings;  
Women with their shabby gowns and faces faded gray,  
Hurrying and worrying, a-scramble for the trappings,  
Flaming with the fever of an age-old Play.

Riches men have died for arrayed in careless fashion—  
Things that must have crawled across the ruthless sands;  
Cargoes that have braved the ocean's wildest, reckless passion,  
Here to feel the heedlessness of hungry hands.











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